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ABSTRACT

In continuing education and college programs throughout Canada, the vast majority of teaching is done by part-time adjunct appointees, most of whom have other work that occupies a major portion of their work lives. Another simultaneously developing trend is that of the increasing efforts by a variety of organizations to encourage workers to assume primary responsibility for their career growth. The Faculty of Continuing Education at the University of Calgary has an ongoing program of studies in management development that relies heavily on part-time instructors recruited from the community at large. The time pressures on these instructors (because they usually have a full-time job in addition to their teaching responsibilities), their lack of ongoing physical contact with other faculty and staff, and the fact that their area of expertise is a technical field rather than pedagogy are all serious constraints that have had to be addressed in designing a staff development program for part-time instructors. One strategy that has been successful in the university's staff development program has been to stress the fact that teaching is career development and that many of the skills needed by teachers (and addressed in the staff development program)--including planning, communicating, scheduling activities, creating an effective climate, relating things to units in a larger system, supervising and motivating others, and evaluating performance--are indeed transferable to many management situations. The use of a collaborative approach to training development and solicitation of outside expertise are two other features of the university's staff development program for part-time instructors. (MN)

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Part-Time Teaching as Career Development

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I Autonomy in the Work Place

The nature of work is changing all around us! Part-time positions are a fast-growing phenomena while other more traditional work patterns are not increasing. Statistics Canada tells us that part-time employment increased by 78% in the decade between 1975-1985. At the same time, full-time employment gained only 15%! For those of us in Universities, it is interesting to note that this parallels the phenomenal increase in part-time students, who by 1975 formed a majority of all students in Canada.[1] In the United States fully 20% of the work force have job-sharing, flex-time, or permanent part-time jobs. Part-time work can meet the individual's need for autonomy, when it is combined with other major life tasks such as caring for young children or attending school or university. The work force of single adults or dual-career couples often find they have the best of both worlds with flexible work schedules. The "Work in American Institute" projects that by the year 2000, half of all North Americans will be on alternate work schedules.

Higher Education makes use of tremendous numbers of part-time instructors. In traditional academic faculties, sessional positions may be the "way in" to an academic position. In continuing education and college programs across the country, the vast majority of teaching is done by part-time adjunct appointees, most of whom have other work which

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[1]Campbell, Duncan D., The New Majority, (University of Alberta Press, 1984), pp.14.

occupies the major portion of their work lives. It is this group of contract instructors that I will refer to in my remarks.

An increasing number of Canadians are adopting an entrepreneurial approach to their careers, and are demanding increased responsibility for planning a lifestyle which puts paid employment into an overall quality of life perspective, often lessening the degree of commitment that was formerly accorded to their "job". The new work ethic, "Work should be fun" has been quietly transforming our workplaces. This revolutionary view has been well documented by researchers such as Yankelovich as the dominant attitude for at least forty percent of our work force.[2]

The "work as self fulfillment" concept is admirably suited to the information society; for information workers are very often committed professionals who are far more skilled at their work and more knowledgeable about it than are their managers and/or superiors. In effect, these people manage themselves. This phenomenon has come to be a hallmark of the new "information worker", and leads to a changed view of the role of the manager as a career coach - a role which few of today's managers fulfill comfortably.

Organizations of all kinds have been responding to pressures from an uncertain economy and from employees by encouraging individual

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[2]Naisbitt, John and Auburdene, Patricia, Re-Inventing the Corporation, (Warner Books, 1985), pp. 93.

workers to take responsibility for career growth. Career Development programs in business have been growing for the past decade, through good and bad economic times.

Many of our traditional bureaucracies have found themselves forced to step out of a paternalistic model when economic dislocations dictated layoffs. Even organizations that managed to weather recessionary storms without laying off workers have been obliged to reconsider the role that they could play in individual careers, and to step back from the role of caretaker. Management theorists have postulated that the employee who feels in control of his or her work-life is more apt to be the productive, satisfied contributor. Best selling works such as "In Search of Excellence" have accelerated a move toward making development of employees a major component of corporate strategy.

Career Development programs have at their heart the integration of employee goals with organizational goals. While these will not be synonymous, attempts to negotiate a "good fit" have proven very worthwhile, in terms of both productivity and satisfaction.

II. Staff Development and Strategic Planning

The Faculty of Continuing Education at the University of Calgary has an on-going program of studies in Management Development leading to eight different certificates. At present there are one hundred and ninety graduates annually from an active part-time student body of over forty-five hundred, with some seventy instructors who are recruited from

The University and from the community at large. Every attempt is made to assure quality in the teaching of our programs. We recruit instructors who combine;

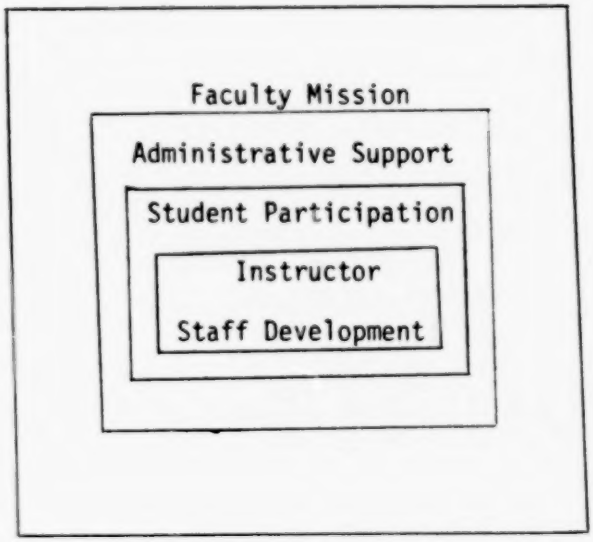
1) demonstrated competence in a teaching capacity, along with a commitment to continuing professional growth as an adult educator.
2) formal, academic preparation suitable to The University environment. In most cases this will be a post-graduate degree or the professional equivalent that is specific to the instructor's discipline.
3) practical experience of several years in a directly related business or professional setting which enables the instructor to demonstrate understanding of current industry practises.

This unique combination of practical and theoretical knowledge mixed with teaching expertise is not easy to find. In fact, about two thirds of our instructors are individuals who have very little experience, and often no training, in teaching competencies. These are essentially subject matter specialists with expertise and practical work experience. Our task is to support instructors while they develop teaching skills. At the same time, a significant instructor group have backgrounds in teaching, consulting or corporate training and development, with very high skill levels as adult educators. The challenge of using these rich resources in a staff development

initiative mirrors the challenge facing our instructors in their classrooms! "Adults learn from one another and enjoy teaching others".[3]

As a program administrator, I see the staff development plan as an integral part of an overall strategic plan for developing and furthering the mission of the Faculty of Continuing Education, as represented by our program motto: "Helping People Change".

The Staff Development plan is one part of a nested process which has a larger program and faculty focus, as illustrated by the diagram below.



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[3]Arin-Krupp, Judy, "Adults are People Too", The Developer, National Staff Development Council, July 1981, p.41.

Staff Development is chosen as the nucleus of the strategic initiative for several reasons. In student surveys, we have very clearly identified quality instruction as what makes our program valuable in the eyes of the students and their employers alike. Since the majority of our student body are sponsored by employer financing, the support of the local business community is a crucial factor in the overall success of the program. Quality instruction requires attention to the development and improvement of the providers of that instruction. We know that only a small group of our instructors have training in teaching methodology, so we have to assume that many are learning on-the-job. In order to facilitate this learning we accept responsibility to provide some opportunity for increasing skills, knowledge, and peer interactions.

Instructors request assistance with their skill development, and are vocal in showing their appreciation and critical analyses of any training and/or professional meetings we schedule. From a questionnaire done in January, 1987, instructor concerns were shown as clearly grounded in self (how does this affect me?) and management (how can I get this organized?) with a smaller group of concerns around impact (are the learners getting what they need?). This would seem to indicate that while new instructors have specific orientation needs, our focus overall can properly be kept on classroom management and practises.

Our instructors represent a typical group of adult learners in their diversity! Age ranges from mid-twenties to late sixties, educational backgrounds from self-taught through narrow technical

specialists to the doctoral degree. Similarly, the "teaching experiences" prior to entering our program range from volunteer coaching or assisting with the boy scouts, through teaching in schools, colleges and universities. We have several who make their living as professional trainers or business consultants. For these reasons it is very difficult to meet the needs of the instructor group through standardized offerings. It is also desirable to find ways of fostering networking so that the skills and expertise of our experienced instructors can be made available to newcomers.

Mobility is high among our instructors. They represent a cross-section of talented workers. I think it fair to say that only an energetic and highly motivated individual looks for the opportunity to teach in an evening program in addition to their regular full-time employment - therefore this group is highly mobile due to job transfers and promotions. We do have a few instructors who stay in the program over five years, and a few who teach only a term or two and leave, but the average tenure would be four or five years as a part-time instructor. The implication is that we must work with new instructors as soon as they enter our program, particularly in the first term of employment.

"Staff Development is a process of fostering personal and professional growth for individuals in order to produce continuous,

responsible self-renewal for educators and institutions".[4] This statement would seem to corroborate my own bias that the staff development initiative be placed at the very heart of overall program improvement. It is our intent to focus on instructor support to help solve specific challenges such as an improved student retention rate across the program; and general challenges, such as maintaining perceptions of quality among students and community members. We monitor these attitudinal factors by regular customer surveys and by annual feedback to the program director from graduating students. We know from these sources that the quality of instruction is the most important factor in selecting a Continuing Education offering, and feel that this warrants a continuous effort in the direction of staff development activities.

We face several unique challenges which act as barriers to our staff development initiatives. Perhaps by examining both the constraints and the drivers, it will be possible to consider how our proposed activities can be made more attractive to program participants.

The first, and most serious constraint, is that of time pressure. Let us recognize at the outset that the part-time instructor has as his/her major focus other roles and responsibilities. For the vast majority of our instructors this means a full-time job in the area of their expertise - appraiser, economist, accountant, professor, corporate

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[4]Arin-Krupp, Judy, "Adults are People Too", The Developer, National Staff Development Council, July 1981, p.41.

trainer, or personnel manager, to name a small sampling. With an on-going staff development program, competition for time will be the major constraint. If our instructors see a common thread between the teaching skills they are developing and the skills that bring rewards and fulfillment "on the job", this constraint will be lessened. (Koll, 1979).

A second constraint is that very few of our instructors would have any on-going personal contact with other instructors in the program or with the staff or faculty at The University. The factor of physical and social isolation places a severe constraint on motivation to become an active participant in a staff development initiative. Yet friendships and team approaches have sprung up between instructors in the program in the past. It will be a major test of the success of our program whether co-operative approaches increase.

The third major constraint to our staff development initiative may well be the most subtle, and the most deep-seated constraint. The fact is that for the vast majority of our instructors their expertise is that of a technical specialist - a content orientation. For these individuals to begin to see themselves as adult educators may provide a significant attitude shift. Attitudes are buried under behaviours but not quite so deep as values,[5] so we must be willing to accept that if

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[5]Feldman, Daniel C., Managing Individual and Group Behaviour in Organizations, (McGraw Hill, 1983).

overt behaviours change in the direction we want - i.e. if instructors act like adult educators, then attitudes will gradually shift as well!

Let us consider the motivating factors that lead toward successful staff development activities. Individuals voluntarily seek opportunities to instruct at the University in a part-time capacity. For many of our instructors, developing skill in teaching is closely tied to personal plans for career expansion and future development. Those individuals who plan careers as entrepreneurs in professional fields need to gain credibility and recognition. For them, the opportunity to gain skill in making presentations or giving workshops is an important element in enhancing a professional reputation - a kind of marketing activity. These instructors display real commitment to their own development and make student satisfaction and growth major goals. For most business consultants, the key skill may well be that of making learning enjoyable to the client group.

The opportunity to enhance positive relationships with students is also a powerful driver in our program. Since the student group is composed of adults from our own community, positive regard for the instructor can become an extremely rewarding outcome for many of our instructors. Tied to this is the realization that many teaching competencies are also areas of personal growth which are highly valued in the wider community, such as interpersonal communications skills. There may be substantial intrinsic rewards associated with continued learning and mastery of teaching skills.

A final driving force toward participation in activities designed to enhance instructor capabilities is that of evaluation and retention in the program. All part-time instruction is contracted for term by term, with no requirement for continued employment. If there are on-going problems between the instructor and his/her classes, there is no need to retain that individual. Thus the driving forces which would encourage active participation in the program range all the way from the carrot to the stick.

III Teaching IS Career Development

One quotation we hear often when groups of educators gather is, "We learn by teaching".

One definition of career development is:

> "any activity or set of activities designed to enhance an organization through the promotion of the personal/professional growth of the management and/or employees of that organization."[6]

Teaching part-time then, may be considered part of an overall career development thrust. The Continuing Education program gains community support, an improved quality of teaching, and a process of

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[6]Phi Delta Kappan, "Staff Development", Exemplary Practice Series, Centre on Evaluation, Development, Research.

on-going staff renewal. The instructor gains skill enhancement, prestige within the professional and business community, and the satisfaction of continued learning with a collaborative support group.

The skills of teaching are transferable to a great many work settings, and indeed, approach the skills of general management. Some of the executive functions of teaching are: planning, communicating goals, scheduling activities in the workplace, creating an effective climate, educating group members, relating this work site to other units in the larger system, supervising and motivating others; and evaluating worker performance.[7]

Classroom instruction provides for the performance, and practise of several critical managerial tasks that part-time instructors may not perform in other work environments.

The collaborative approach used to ascertain training needs assures that programs are relevant to participants. An instructor group assists with planning of workshop events after needs data has been collected by program staff. Recently, a concerns-based method of collecting data was used to verify the apparent continued emphasis on classroom management skills. Programs are conducted by an instructor whenever possible. In this diverse group we have several highly trained educators with many years of teaching and consulting expertise.

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[7]Berliner, D. "The Executive Funcitons of Teaching", The Instructor, September 1983, page 30.

Outside expertise is sought as well, keeping in mind that our student clients represent a broad cross-section of the local business community. Our instructors welcome an opportunity to hear from a senior trainer or a manager who has responsibility for a Human Resource function in the profit sector. Implicit in the overall thrust of our programs is increased interaction between the local business community, and the University. Our instructors are in boundary-spanning roles, "connecting company and classroom".[8]

The blurring of boundaries between corporations and academia, as well as the emphasis placed on education in business, is well documented in the Carnegie Foundation report "Corporate Classrooms" (1985) which points out that corporations currently spend more on education and training than do all the colleges and universities in North America combined.[9]

- 18 corporations and associations award degrees - predict 26 by 1988.
- At least four corporations offer the masters degree, and the Rand Corporation sponsors a Ph.D. program open to both employees and the public.

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[8]Naisbitt, John and Auburdene, Patricia Re-Inventing the Corporation, (Warner Books, 1985), pp. 183.

[9]Naisbitt, John and Auburdene, Patricia, Re-Inventing the Corporation, (Warner Books, 1985), pp. 185.

In conclusion, I submit that part-time teaching contributes significantly to the professional development of the individual instructor as well as to the relevance of the certificate programs. It is time for us to consider collaborative alternatives which result in mutually beneficial outcomes for individuals and organizations, and to begin to turn away from the industrial model of confrontation. The ambiguities and discontinuities of our present work situations demand responses that are creative, personally fulfilling, and entrepreneurial. The Association of Part-Time Professionals, with over two million members in the United States, describe the characteristics of jobs that lend themselves to part-time schedules. These characteristics include:

- multiple skills or responsibilities required
- relatively independent or project oriented positions
- peak work loads or schedules
- deadlines known in advance
- creativity a key job component.

The position of teacher was among the top ten occupations for part-time professionals every year that ratings have been kept.[10]

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[10]Rothberg, D.S. and Ensor Cook, B., Part-Time Professional, (Washington D.C.: Acropolis Books, 1985), pp. 16-17.

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